



Department
for Education

Remote education blended delivery case studies

**Good practice developed during the
coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

August 2021

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Summary

Schools have written case studies to share how they have approached teaching classes of pupils both in-school and remotely (which we will refer to as 'blended delivery').

We know that blended delivery has been challenging and we hope these case studies provide an opportunity for schools to learn from each other's good practice as they continue to develop their provision in response to COVID-19. We also hope these case studies provide an opportunity to celebrate the hard work and progress schools have made in remote education and its different forms throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before August 2022.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for schools and early years providers.

Main points

To help share good practice across schools, the Department for Education invited schools and Multi Academy Trusts to document aspects of their blended delivery practice that may be of interest and benefit other schools. Each case study sets out details of practice relating to an aspect of blended delivery.

Developing the language skills and promoting the wellbeing of children in early years foundation stage (EYFS)

A case study from Olive School. Olive School is a primary school located in Bolton and is part of Star Academies.

Context

We were concerned that our EYFS pupils might stall in the development of language skills and feel isolated from school while on-site attendance was restricted. A significant number of our children have English as an additional language and their immersion in stimulating vocabulary and syntactic patterns in school is the foundation of our success.

Approach

A language-rich offer was at the heart of our approach to remote education. We provided a simplified daily timetable for children that prioritised vocabulary development and involved children at home interacting with staff and peers at school. Every morning, 3 short 'live' sessions took place: registration, a mathematics lesson and phonics teaching. Following this, children at home worked on independent activities away from the screen that focused on English and mathematics. Lots of songs with actions linked to key concepts (shapes, numbers, phonics) were included.

Our early years curriculum includes a 'story of the week,' which children encounter 5 times per day in school. After joining a live class to hear the initial reading of the story, children at home were sent a link to a video of the author, or a member of the EYFS team, narrating it so that they could build familiarity with it and learn the language patterns. Our language activities in school are closely linked to the story and this was the same for children who were taught remotely. We sent home activity packs and resources to help them with these tasks. We included stories such as *WorrySaurus* and *While We Can't Hug* to give children the opportunity to explore their emotions. During live lessons, each child who was at home was encouraged to unmute themselves and talk about how they were feeling.

Children at home continued to read individually from books uploaded to MS Teams which were differentiated according to their ability to blend sounds. On a weekly basis, all children were given a time slot to be called on MS Teams. During this slot, a staff member would screen-share a PowerPoint presentation of the story and the child would read aloud. Parents could hear the feedback their child received and have some further time with the staff member to discuss their children's progress further. Children and their parents looked forward to them and they provided good opportunities for reading and talking together.

To ensure high levels of engagement with parents and children, we made expectations clear to parents from the start and followed up immediately if a child did not join the class when we expected them to be there. Follow up calls were made by members of the year team who knew the children and families well and were focused on helping them resolve issues such as connectivity. These calls enabled us to give emotional support too.

We maintained children's excitement about school by producing videos that we sent to parents. These included staff reading stories in unusual places and costumes. They were particularly geared to keeping the sense of community that we have always engendered.

Our weekly Wellbeing Challenges gave families some fun activities to complete together (such as nature art, where they were encouraged to go on a walk and collect leaves, pebbles and other materials before assembling a piece of art in the style of a well-known artist). Each activity was introduced by a 'hook' video created by the staff, which were extensively celebrated.

Result

Children maintained contact with their teachers, support staff and friends. They continued to follow the routines that were well established in school and, through regular practice and repetition of language, developed their vocabulary. Parents were already familiar with the platform we used and found it helpful as a means of accessing tasks at times when their children could work on them.

We have ironed out any teething issues and set a strong culture, including agreeing as a school what good remote education looks like. To align our in-school curriculum with our remote provision, we have adjusted timetables, including by mirroring the timetables of classes in the same year group to enable pupil groups to be combined if needed.

Staff have developed wide ranging skills in digital pedagogy that built on work that we had undertaken pre-lockdown. We are well equipped to continue providing remote education to children isolating at home where needed, alongside in-class teaching.

Using digital platforms to support blended delivery (primary school multi academy trust)

A case study from The Cornerstone Academy Trust (TCAT). TCAT is based in Devon and consists of 4 primary schools.

Context

Providing reliable, high quality remote education became essential for all students, teachers and staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was crucial that all 4 schools in the Trust could continue 'business as usual', which we achieved through our digital platform.

Approach

We utilised the tools and features of Microsoft 365, Teams and OneNote, building on what we already used for lesson planning pre-pandemic, to develop a seamless system that removed any friction between virtual, face-to-face and blended education.

For example, OneNote allows teachers to place text, images, video, interactive tasks and simulations within a single resource. This creates easily accessible, highly engaging and motivating lesson content.

Teachers taught in-class and recorded live lessons. In a situation where some children were at home, and some in school, our digital platform allowed those at home the option of being involved live or accessing the recorded lesson at a later time that suited their family life and access to technology. This approach allowed all children to access the same lesson and reduced teacher workload across the Trust, as only one teacher was required to record each lesson.

We also set up a new website to guide parents in this new way of working. Parents were directed to this website as a first port of call for information on how to access the work, log in to all the school software and refer to help files. Through this site we operated a support desk that allowed parents to log issues and get remote support from a dedicated staff team. This reduced the number of technical issues when accessing work, and therefore all children were able to continue with their education relatively seamlessly.

Result

Our solution using the Microsoft platform made education accessible to all pupils in a way that produced as normal a school day as possible. We had very high levels of engagement, virtually or physically, throughout the various periods of lockdown and quarantine.

In a very short period of time, Microsoft made improvements to Teams, adding extra features that included analytics of engagement and assignment data. We were able to see that most children engaged in live online lessons, and we could track the remaining pupils to ensure they were accessing asynchronously, or through additional support.

The platform has worked so well that we will continue to make the most of the features we have learnt about in the last year. We have decided to continue recording lessons going forward, so that children can re-watch, catch-up or revise at any time.

Having experienced the proof of concept for even the youngest pupils, we are now providing one-to-one access to digital devices for all children, including early years, in all the Trust schools. This is to support children in their education when appropriate during their normal school day as another tool – along with their pencils, ruler, rubber – to be used when needed.

Supporting staff with using digital technology (primary school multi academy trust)

A case study from The Cornerstone Academy Trust (TCAT). TCAT is based in Devon and consists of 4 primary schools.

Context

The use of technology has been integral to everything we do at the Cornerstone Academy Trust for many years. The new ways of working triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that all of our staff needed to develop new skills in using digital technology. This need was particularly important for features of the technology not previously required.

Approach

We implemented regular, live staff training sessions through Teams, which staff accessed remotely. Initially, we had a concentrated period of targeted training matched to role, followed by weekly sessions responding to staff needs and updates in the digital platform and tools we used. These were all recorded so that staff could refer to them again whenever they needed to.

Weekly staff CPD sessions ran after school on Fridays, and further support was provided through a series of short help videos available to all staff. These were accessed as Teams meetings recorded into Stream, and focused on a mix of curriculum priorities taken from teacher feedback and hints and tips to overcome issues arising from the virtual delivery of teaching.

In addition, we scheduled staff break times and lunchtime slots in the Teams calendar where staff could log in to a virtual staff room. This allowed them to keep in touch with their colleagues, offer and receive support, and maintain a strong teamworking environment.

Result

Staff reported that they felt connected even when remote from each other and the children, because they had easy access to their line manager as well as their network of colleagues for support. They found the CPD sessions extremely valuable:

“After being initially nervous of online delivery, the regular training helped me to gain confidence and taught me how to adapt my teaching online. This has given me skills that I can use in my daily teaching from now on.”

“The staff training enabled our team to keep the best part of team teaching and planning, so we were able to provide the best for children during such a difficult time.”

Staff also reported experiencing less pressure than they had previously been aware of when travelling between school sites. The ability to run cross-Trust lessons through technology contributed to the reduction of staff workload.

The time saved by teaching in this way was used to produce improved, high-quality resources. These included resources utilising the accessibility features of Microsoft Office for special educational needs and disability (SEND) students, such as captions in Teams meetings and bullet points of useful features.

The Trust now has digitally skilled staff who are competent using technology, even when teaching face-to-face, and they are maximising the use of features we did not use before.

We plan to maintain regular staff training so that staff retain the skills they have developed, reduce the need for face-to-face and cross-site meetings and, where appropriate, work from home efficiently and with less stress.

Delivering a blended approach for children with SEND (special school)

A case study from Highfurlong School. Highfurlong School has 105 pupils with a wide range of complex SEND on-roll in their Blackpool special school.

Context

Many pupils are unable to physically access remote education independently due to their educational needs and disabilities. This is not only a COVID-19 related issue: our pupils sometimes have prolonged periods of absence due to illness or recovering from surgery for example. The challenge was how to replicate the education that takes place in school (usually facilitated by a high ratio of skilled staff to pupils and supported by on-site therapists) and support families in an area of high deprivation.

In January 2021, Highfurlong had roughly 50% of pupils attending school on-site and 50% participating in remote education. In a school where each child accesses a curriculum personalised to their specific educational needs, supported by specialised resources and teaching approaches, we had to try and replicate some of that quickly in the home environment while being extremely mindful of the pressures on families and safeguarding needs.

Digital Platform: Seesaw

For the last 2 years we have used Seesaw to communicate directly with pupils and parents, record pupil work and record pupil levels against our assessment system.

Seesaw was key to informing parents of COVID-19 updates and changes in guidance and the school day. Pupil work that has been completed over the various lockdowns is evidenced on Seesaw and will be included as part of the student's evidence for learning. Seesaw has reduced staff workload as the photographs submitted both in and out of school are evidence of learning and can be levelled against our assessment system as soon as they are uploaded. In the past we would take photographs, upload them to our network drive and then review evidence for assessment half-termly. Today the time is halved by having the evidence already in the app.

Ensuring pupil access to remote education

To stay connected to pupils over the last 12 months we purchased additional devices through the Get Help with Technology DfE scheme. We also purchased Wifi dongles and SIM cards. We asked parents multiple times over the course of the year to contact us should they require any more devices or support with connectivity.

Many of our pupils are unable to physically access conventional laptops or PCs and require specialist assistive technology. We loaned some of the specialist equipment we have in school to parents for those working from home, along with instructions or 'how to' videos.

We also used technology to remove some of the barriers pupils might experience. For example, for some pupils who may struggle to read the lesson objective, sending it as a voice note removed that barrier and allowed the pupil to keep referring back to the instructions as many times as they needed. This was also beneficial for pupils who required a longer processing time, such as pupils with ASD and dyslexia, as they could refer back as often as they needed without losing their place in their work.

Pastoral activities

While half the school was being educated remotely, Zoom was used for whole school assemblies and celebration events to stay connected as a school family. Each class would stay in their class bubble in their classrooms and join the celebration event via Zoom on their class TV. One example of an activity the pupils participated in this way included a whole school song where pupils signed along. Classes were given the music in advance and were taught the signs in their class bubble before coming together via a whole school Zoom call. Our Christmas production was also held in this way, as opposed to coming together physically as a whole school in the drama studio. Pupils have held Children in Need and Red Nose Day events on Zoom and have shared with their peers the activities they have done in their class bubbles.

We encouraged teachers to be creative with their pastoral activities and focus on those relationships which are so important for engaging pupils, especially pupils with SEND.

Speech and language therapy

Our speech and language therapists delivered remote therapy so that our children could still receive therapy and have those needs met. As a school we found a real shift in the confidence of our parents who had engaged in remote therapy sessions: rather than being the observers in their child's therapy, they became the facilitator. This is one area we would like to continue as we believe that, if parents are feeling more confident, it will encourage them to continue the therapy targets at home.

Assessment

For our pupils with SEND accessing remote education, it is difficult to check understanding accurately as there is a significant adult reliance. Our teachers use their existing knowledge and assessment records and request as many videos for evidence as

possible to show independent education. The teacher would regularly refer to previous assessments and question whether they would expect to see this work in class.

Tracking engagement

As a school we created a remote education tracker to identify which pupils and families were engaging and who needed more support. Teachers completed this weekly to highlight which pupils had participated in remote education and how many sessions over the week. This tracker ensured that no child/family were left behind and also supported our safeguarding procedures.

For pupils who were not in school, staff also supported home visits to keep pupils engaged and to offer respite for both pupils and parents. Our school COVID-19 risk assessment and home visiting procedures were crucial to keeping staff and pupils safe.

Using digital platforms to support blended delivery (primary school multi academy trust)

A case study from LEO Academy Trust. LEO Academy Trust is a Multi Academy Trust of 6 primary schools in Sutton, South London.

Context

Like many schools and colleges over the last 12 months, LEO Academy Trust has had to shift its approach to teaching in the context of COVID-19.

Despite schools returning to the physical buildings in March 2021, the Trust still had a number of children that were unable to access education on-site as they were clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) and advised to stay at home or were self-isolating.

We needed to create a blended delivery approach, where teachers were successfully supported to educate children from nursery to key stage 2 both in school (face to face) and at home (remotely).

Approach

When considering how to educate children in a blended model, the Trust's focus was to deliver the same opportunities and outcomes for children onsite and for those at home. All children in key stage 2 and staff within the Trust had access to a device due to a highly successful 1:1 programme that was already in place for all key stage 2 children prior to the pandemic. In addition, the Trust also provided all EYFS and key stage 1 children with access to a device and internet access, if they did not have these resources available to them at home, via the DfE laptop scheme and from the Trust's reserves. This was a key aspect of the LEO Academy Trust's response to the pandemic and was implemented within the first couple of days of schools being asked to limit attendance to only vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

Prior to establishing our blended delivery approach, the Trust spent time working with pupils, parents and staff to identify the specific needs of individual families. During the first lockdown, we were in contact with every family on a weekly basis. As part of these conversations, we regularly spoke to families to fully understand the successes and challenges that families experienced. This helped teachers and senior leaders to adapt provision for specific families. In the second lockdown, we shifted to daily contact with families, with an increased focus on delivering provision for children with SEND. The Trust's central team worked closely with teachers to identify problems and provided further central resources and opportunities for pupils who needed further support.

Having explored a variety of options and models, we wanted to ensure that all teaching was planned in such a way that it could be delivered physically on site, but also in a

remote model, if required. We were very conscious that teachers had pupils at home and at school with access to different resources, so we wanted to ensure that every pupil had access to the same high quality teaching and opportunities, and that lessons were only planned once. This was crucial as it ensured LEO Academy Trust could deliver quality teaching, whilst managing workload and wellbeing of staff.

When attendance was mandatory, some CEV children who were advised to stay at home were still taught remotely. During this period, we worked closely with their parents to ensure that the children felt part of the school community. For example, children joined lessons remotely from home, were able to take part in whole school assemblies and engage in classroom discussions with their peers.

For the vast majority of children being educated off site, teachers shared resources with parents and children utilising Google Classroom and Seesaw platforms. Resources were also emailed home to parents where this was helpful. For a very small number of SEND and CEV children, the Trust was able to order and send resources directly to the children's homes where this was identified as a need. This included textbooks, copies of class novels and maths manipulatives such as dienes, hundreds squares and counters.

Lessons were taught to children on site in the usual manner but were also streamed using Google Meet technology to children being educated off site. Children were able to use the same meeting details for the duration of their off-site education which meant that most children were able to work independently at home, without the need for considerable parental involvement. Teachers engaged the children at home through targeted questioning and children were able to hear and take part in class discussions.

The Trust carefully evaluated the safeguarding risk to children during this time and updated their policies accordingly. It was decided that children and staff benefitted from being able to see one another and maintain social connection, so children's cameras were enabled. Staff across the Trust received training on the Trust's approach, ensuring children were safeguarded at all times whilst also providing high quality teaching. Further lessons were provided to children on behaviour and appropriate use of technology. This was communicated clearly to parents through newsletters and daily emails.

When children on site completed independent tasks, children being educated off site completed the same task and returned their work to school via Google Classroom or Seesaw. Teaching staff responded to the child's work and provided feedback in a timely manner, ensuring children's progress was not hindered.

Result

As a result of teaching children in a blended model, LEO Academy Trust was able to provide all pupils access to high quality teaching. Despite the challenges that schools were presented with, we were able to extensively support CEV children, ensuring that

some of our pupils with the highest level of need were supported and included within the school community.

Through the Trust's internal pupil wellbeing survey, the Trust saw that of the children who responded, all of those educated off site reported that they still felt part of their class community and that they were well supported with their education. Internal data has shown that the Trust's approach ensured that any learning loss was limited and that most CEV children returned to school having made good progress at home during the Autumn and Spring Terms.

Having successfully delivered teaching in a blended model, LEO Academy Trust plans to maintain its infrastructure, devices and teacher expertise so that all teaching can be delivered in this way as and when it might be required due to COVID-19. The Trust is also fortunate to have an experienced and knowledgeable Central team that is able to continue to provide staff CPD and training on the effective use of technology to enhance teaching.

Looking to the future, the Trust is considering how technology could enable specialist teachers to teach groups of children across the Trust and how bespoke provision for children with SEND can be delivered for most impact.

Promoting pupil engagement and wellbeing (primary school multi academy trust)

A case study from LEO Academy Trust. LEO Academy Trust is a Multi Academy Trust of 6 primary schools in Sutton, South London.

Context

Like many schools and colleges, over the course of the pandemic, the LEO Academy Trust has not only had to shift its approach to teaching but has also had to ensure it continued to keep children engaged and safe. The challenge for the Trust was to continue to offer excellent wellbeing and support to every child, even when they were being taught remotely.

Approach

Through the LEO Academy Trust's approach to remote education, they were able to offer a wide range of opportunities to engage children with the curriculum and the wider extra-curricular offer that the Trust provided.

Prior to the periods of restricted on-site attendance, the Trust had already committed to providing every child with access to their own Chromebook and internet access (for those who did not have connectivity). This was a crucial pillar of the Trust's approach as it ensured there was no digital divide and connectivity did not prove a barrier to education.

Across all of the schools in the Trust, whole school opportunities continued to be provided in such a way that pupils onsite and pupils at home could access them. This included live streamed and recorded assemblies, remote school discos, virtual reading clubs, new online clubs and a full extra-curricular offer, all delivered remotely. A number of highly successful curriculum theme weeks were also planned and delivered.

We tried to replicate, as best as we could, the teaching that would have taken place in the classroom in an online manner. Teachers continued to use strategies that they would have used in the classroom, for example targeted questioning, breakout rooms to facilitate paired and group discussion, as well as monitoring and providing feedback on work which children had completed. Support staff were carefully used to support specific individuals, for example children who may have found the previous day's lesson difficult would become part of a focus breakout room to recap previously taught content.

To ensure staff were able to effectively use the technology needed for blended delivery, the Trust invested in a range of high-quality support and training. This included training on EdTech tools for class teaching as well as 1:1 support with individual children.

Staff carefully monitored and tracked pupil engagement of pupils off-site, which was seen in a number of different ways – joining a lunchtime extra-curricular club, returning work via Seesaw or Google Classroom, attending whole class teaching or engaging with online cloud-based teaching tools. Staff used this to identify children who were becoming a cause for concern and school leadership teams were able to offer further guidance and support.

Result

As a result of the Trust's commitment to children's engagement and wellbeing, children continued to receive access to a wide range of exciting educational experiences throughout both school closures. For example, children worked with 2 Team GB Olympians during our Health & Fitness Week, took part in dance lessons with cast members from West End musicals, enjoyed writing lessons with published authors and workshops with local artists. They also developed new interests and skills through Trust-wide competitions for photography and cookery.

National events such as World Book Day and British Science Week were switched online, with children taking part in Trust-wide events on Google Meet. Live stream for events for Maths Week and Music Week also connected pupils with their peers in a fun and interactive way.

With online access to a broad and balanced curriculum, pupil engagement remained high while at home and this made the transition back to face-to-face education much easier. Several opportunities to connect with their class teachers and peers via Google Meet calls supported pupils' wellbeing and ensured friendships continued. It was also noted that all pupils benefited from having a daily routine; this helped them to stay focused and happier while at home and brought some normality and stability in such unknown times.

In terms of staff workload and wellbeing, the new ways of working prompted by COVID-19 have had a positive impact. Staff are collaborating across the Trust much more, sharing resources and planning across schools and working alongside other teachers and staff who have pupils with similar needs. As a result of the last 12 months, staff are more committed to use technology to widen opportunities for pupils and deepen their engagement with the curriculum. For example, we will continue to bring experts and inspirational speakers virtually into our classrooms.

Using curriculum resources to support blended delivery (primary school)

A case study from Charles Dickens Primary School which is located in central London.

Context

Charles Dickens Primary school has relatively high numbers of vulnerable pupils, and children of critical workers. From early in 2021, the school had to provide opportunities for simultaneous remote and in-class lesson delivery with equitable access to high quality lessons in all year groups. Many pupils had inconsistent digital access or were viewing lessons on small screens. It was therefore necessary to find a way to deliver high quality education which did not purely rely on digital methods.

Approach

We introduced curriculum booklets for all subjects and year groups. We already used a commercial textbook and workbook package for mathematics, which had supported improved outcomes across all year groups and particularly for middle and low prior attainers. We had also previously trialed the development of a combined textbook and workbook for history, so we knew this was effective in supporting pupil's progress.

We established a central curriculum team, led by senior staff, who worked together with subject leaders to write the booklets. The team developed workbooks for geography, phonics, science, guided reading, religious studies and history. These were designed with a consistent voice in writing and consistent lesson structures (e.g. quizzes, extended writing). We placed great importance on ensuring these were coherently sequenced, but also made them visually appealing for our young pupils. Middle and senior leaders joined subject planning teams to support with workload management; we reduced the classroom teaching time of some teachers to give them more time to develop central resources and their teaching commitment was shared with those who would normally teach smaller groups or cover classes.

We introduced live streaming for English and mathematics in the second period of restricted on-site attendance, to maintain relationships and support daily assessment of progress. Teachers also felt confident to teach live lessons at this point. Lessons with curriculum booklets were not live-streamed as pre-recorded lessons worked well.

Each child was issued with their own booklets and they used these either at home or at school depending on where they were working that day. The fact that the teaching for the lesson (instructions, explanations, links to videos etc.) was embedded in the booklet as well as the tasks meant that pupils with limited digital access at home could continue to progress.

For these lessons, pupils who were at home completed their work using the booklet and supporting video then submitted their work via email at the end of the school day. Work was reviewed and feedback was given either in written format via parents or on the phone. We also hosted a weekly video newsletter where pupil's work was publicly praised whether they were at home or at school. Teachers referred pupils to the workbooks during lessons as opposed to creating separate presentations and resources onscreen or via links.

Result

Pupils' remote work was of a high quality and pupil engagement with lessons remained at or above 95% throughout the period of restricted attendance. Quizzes embedded in booklets as well as extended writing at the end of units supported consistent, low-stakes formative assessment.

Parents reported that the workbooks enabled them to better support their children at home and allowed their children to be more independent in following the lessons. They were also able to help their children catch up with schoolwork more easily if any lessons were missed and understood the expectations of their children and what they were being taught more fully.

The workbooks particularly supported those pupils with SEND who were working remotely as they were designed to reduce cognitive load with careful scaffolding.

The workload in creating the booklets was manageable as teams of teachers shared the workload of lessons across classes. Teachers also reported that the centralised resourcing reduced workload in planning, enabling them to focus on adapting their teaching to the needs of the pupils and building relationships with those working remotely.

Ensuring pupil engagement and minimising staff workload when teaching in-class and remotely (secondary school)

A case study from Tauheedul Islam Boys' High School, which is a secondary school in Blackburn and is part of Star Academies.

Context

We have 621 pupils, the majority of whom speak English as an additional language. We were concerned that our pupils, all of whom are boys, might disengage with education in the remote environment and lose motivation.

Approach

Led by our IT Technician, we ensured devices were fit for purpose by carrying out an 'IT MOT'. Pupils were given microphones and cameras to aid engagement when they were being taught from home.

We adopted MS OneNote as the default for teachers' planning, pupils' recording and for all the school's business activities. Pupils at home used OneNote so teachers could check and probe their work in real-time whilst pupils in class would work in their own books.

We recognised that assessment in its many forms was a continuing priority and developed the use of 'digital inking' so that pupils received timely, appropriately detailed feedback on their work, to which they could respond. Pupils at home typed on OneNote and those who had a stylus completed work using their touch screen devices. Pupils could also use paper and upload a picture using Microsoft Office Lens.

To support staff's capability in blended delivery, we designated a SLT member to have responsibility for staff CPD in remote education and digital skills. We ran a staff CPD programme in which faculty-based training was supplemented with online courses, using both Microsoft training and Star Academies resources. Staff were given a bespoke CPD programme using Microsoft Learning Pathways to improve their practice and we upskilled our IT Technician on Microsoft programmes.

By defining our core tools and training staff so that everyone understood not only the applications themselves but the rationale for their use, we created a commonality of approach. This ensured that our pupils were familiar with common expectations across the school.

Teaching and support staff adopted different ways of managing lesson delivery, depending on the number of students at home and staffing levels. Where needed,

classes were combined to cover for staff who were absent. This approach meant almost all lessons were taught by a subject specialist.

Teachers also taught pupils face-to-face and online in one virtual classroom where possible; one teacher would focus on those face-to-face and, where a member of support staff was available, they would manage the 'chat' function and those at home. Where support staff were not available, the teacher would alternate between questioning those at home and those face-to-face as well as using guiding principles such as *Everybody Writes* and *No Opt Out*.

Students were also taught asynchronously, as lesson recordings were made available for students who needed to revise after the lesson or could not attend the live session for any reason.

Expectations for each lesson were set and we shared our ICT policy with students, parents, and staff which covered appropriate use and conduct. We created clear expectations that teachers would not have to re-teach and the onus was on the pupils to watch the lesson and then complete the set task.

We ensured pupils with special education needs were supported with remote education when needed, replicating the physical presence of a learning support assistant with their remote presence in a supervised digital breakout room. Learning support assistants worked closely with teachers, and also received the same level of CPD to use digital tools to support those working at home. Pupils with SEND were issued with digital devices and given supportive remote induction in their use. IEPs were updated remotely.

The pupils who we knew to be most vulnerable through our 'pupil passport' process received additional pastoral support, over and above the individual calls made on a weekly basis to all pupils being taught remotely. Time was allocated for making 10 calls per day from the Head of Year – teaching staff did not have to make any calls to avoid impact on their workload. We put in place a ranking system based on priority, and the expectation was each pupil was spoken to once every fortnight. Admin staff and the Senior Leadership Team were on hand to support with calls should the need arise.

Pastoral and teaching staff managed the communication with home and looked at the holistic needs of children and families through bi-weekly completion of the Warwick-Edinburgh wellbeing questionnaire.

Result

We saw high levels of engagement which we monitored through work completed in lessons and on OneNote, interaction in lessons, completion of exit and start tasks, as well as summative and formative exams using online tools. Online attendance was 99.53% during lockdown.

Pastoral staff contacted parents to ensure their child attended every lesson.

By sharing resources and planning and by using technology to aid assessment, we were able to avoid unnecessary staff workload.

We have shared our practice with other schools in Star Academies. We will continue to review and develop our remote education and blended provision, including through ongoing CPD which we will include this as part of new staff induction.



Department
for Education

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